



UNIVERSITI TEKNIKAL MALAYSIA MELAKA

**SYNTHETIC HYBRID LAMINATE COMPOSITE USING
POLYESTER VIA HAND LAY UP FOR HARDBOARD
APPLICATION**

This report submitted in accordance with requirement of the Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) for the Bachelor Degree of Manufacturing Engineering (Engineering Materials)

By

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
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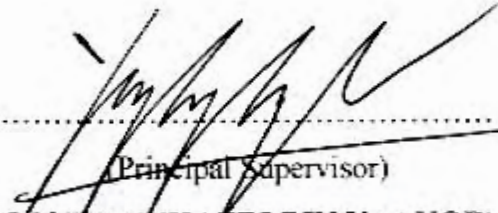
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ABSTRAK

Dalam kajian ini, sifat mekanikal poliester dengan menggunakan kaedah *hand lay up* dalam hibrid laminat komposit telah dikaji bagi aplikasi papan keras. Bahan - bahan asas yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah poliester tak tepu, gentian kaca jenis E dan kawat besi. Penyelidikan ini telah dimulakan dengan mengkaji ciri dan sifat yang diperlukan untuk aplikasi papan keras. Penyelidikan ini juga bertujuan untuk menentukan sifat-sifat mekanikal dan fizikal berdasarkan jumlah lapisan dan jenis susunan gentian kaca bersama kawat besi yang berbeza dalam sistem laminat komposit. Tambahan lagi, nisbah yang paling optimum antara bahan pengikat dan bahan penguat dalam komposit telah dikaji. Melalui jumlah lapisan dan susunan dalam komposit laminat yang berbeza akan dibuat menggunakan kaedah *hand lay up*. Proses pengerasan untuk poliester akan dijalankan pada suhu bilik di bawah penekanan sejuk. Sebanyak sebelas jenis komposit laminat telah dihasilkan dan dipotong mengikut geometri khusus berdasarkan kepada piawaian ASTM untuk keperluan setiap ujian mekanikal. Penambahan kawat besi dan gentian kaca dalam komposit sintetik ini diharapkan dapat meningkatkan nilai daya impak, tarikan, lenturan, sifat kekerasan serta ketahanan terhadap air yang di uji dalam makmal. Daripada ujian, sampel yang paling optimum diamati dan dipilih. Berdasarkan analisis dari kedua-dua ujian mekanikal dan fizikal, didapati bahawa hibrid laminat komposit SN 9 dengan 7 gentian kaca di atas dan 3 lapis di bawah dari kawat besi diperkuatkan poliester memberikan nilai yang paling tinggi dari kekuatan tarikan dengan 198.21 MPa, kekuatan lenturan dengan 4.52 MPa, kekuatan impak dengan 208.20 kJ/m² dan sifat kekerasan dengan 87.2. Selain itu, pertahanan terhadap air dari hibrid laminat komposit ini adalah lebih baik. Sifat-sifat untuk sampel ini telah dibanding dengan produk sebenarnya iaitu palet plastik untuk mengantikannya dalam aplikasi papan keras. Sebagai hasilnya, sifat-sifat yang unggul adalah didapati dalam sampel ini sekiranya dibanding dengan produk sebenarnya.

ABSTRACT

In this study, the mechanical properties of polyester resins by hand lay up method in a hybrid laminate composite had been investigated for hardboard application. The raw materials used were unsaturated polyester, glass fiber type E and wire mesh. This research was started by the study of characterization and properties required for hardboard applications. Then, it was aimed to determine the properties of different layer and arrangement of glass fiber and wire mesh reinforcements in a laminate composite system. In addition, the most optimum ratio of matrix and reinforcement in the composite based on cost and properties was investigated. The different layers and arrangements in laminate composite were then fabricated by hand lay up method. The curing of polyester was done at room temperature under cold press. Eleven samples of laminate composite had been fabricated and cut into the specific dimensions accordingly to the ASTM standard for each mechanical testing. The enhancement of the tensile, flexural, impact, hardness properties as well as water resistance of the synthetic composites had been investigated by laboratory testing. From the testing, the most optimum sample were observed and selected. Based on the analysis of both mechanical and physical testing, it was found that the hybrid laminate composite of SN 9 with 7 fiberglass at top and 3 layers at bottom of the wire mesh reinforced polyester resin gave the highest value of tensile strength with 198.21 MPa, flexural strength with 4.52 MPa, impact strength with 208.20 kJ/m² and hardness with 87.2. Besides that, the water resistance of this hybrid laminate composite was better. The properties of this sample had been compared to the actual product that was plastic pallet in order to replace it in hardboard application. As a result, superior properties were found in the sample as compared to the actual product.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my beloved father, Khor Yak Tiang and mother, Chong Soon Mei for giving me financial and moral support.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstrak	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
Dedication	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	xi
List of Symbols	xiv
List of Abbreviations	xv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	3
1.3 Objectives	4
1.4 Scope of Study	4
1.5 Rational of Research	5
1.6 Research Methodology	6
1.7 Thesis Frames	8
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 Introduction of Composite	10
2.1.1 Classifications of Composite Materials	11
2.1.2 Fiber Reinforced Plastic Composite	13
2.1.3 Hybrid Laminate Composite	13
2.2 Failure Mode Behaviour	15
2.3 Hardboard	15
2.3.1 Previous Invention of Hardboard	16
2.4 Matrix Material	17
2.4.1 Thermoplastics	18
2.4.2 Thermosets	19

2.4.2.1	Epoxy Resin	20
2.4.2.2	Polyester Resin	21
2.4.2.3	Phenolic Resin	22
2.4.3	Summary of thermoplastic vs. thermoset	22
2.4.4	Summary of Thermoset Resin	24
2.5	Fiber Reinforcements	24
2.5.1	Glass Fibers	25
2.5.2	Carbon Fibers	27
2.5.3	Aramid Fibers	27
2.5.4	Summary of Fibers	28
2.5.5	Glass Fiber Reinforcement Forms	29
2.6	Wire Mesh Reinforcement	31
2.6.1	Types of Wire Mesh	32
2.7	Fabrications of Composites	33
2.7.1	Open Moulding	33
2.7.1.1	Hand Lay Up	33
2.7.1.2	Spray Up	35
2.7.2	Closed Moulding	36
2.7.2.1	Vacuum Infusion Process	36
2.7.3	Summary of Fabrication Method	37
2.8	Previous Related Researches on Fiber Reinforced Thermosets	38
3.	METHODOLOGY	41
3.1	Introduction	41
3.2	Material Selection	42
3.2.1	Unsaturated Polyester Resin	42
3.2.2	Fiberglass 600	44
3.2.3	Wire Mesh	45
3.3	Composite Design	46
3.3.1	Size	46
3.3.2	Orientation of Glass Fibers and Wire Mesh	47
3.3.3	Thickness	49

3.3.4	Layers and Arrangement	49
3.4	Fabrication Method	53
3.5	Mechanical Testing	55
3.5.1	Tensile Test	56
3.5.2	Charpy Impact Test	57
3.5.3	Flexural Test	58
3.5.4	Hardness Test	59
3.6	Water Absorption Test	61
3.7	Visual Inspection	62
3.8	Testing On Actual Product	62
4.	ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	64
4.1	Density	64
4.2	Mechanical Testing	67
4.2.1	Hardness Test	67
4.2.2	Tensile Test	72
4.2.2.1	SN 1	72
4.2.2.2	SN 2	74
4.2.2.3	SN 3	76
4.2.2.4	SN 4	79
4.2.2.5	SN 5	80
4.2.2.6	SN 6	82
4.2.2.7	SN 7	84
4.2.2.8	SN 8	86
4.2.2.9	SN 9	88
4.2.2.10	SN 10	90
4.2.2.11	SN 11	92
4.2.2.12	Actual Product	94
4.2.2.13	Young's Modulus for Tensile Test	95
4.2.2.14	UTS for Tensile Test	98
4.2.2.15	Maximum Force for Tensile Test	101
4.2.2.16	Extension for Tensile Test	104
4.2.3	Flexural Test	107

4.2.3.1	Maximum Force for Flexural Test	111
4.2.3.2	Maximum Stress for Flexural Test	113
4.2.3.3	Extension at Peak for Flexural Test	115
4.2.4	Impact Test	118
4.2.4.1	Energy Absorbed Result	118
4.2.4.2	Impact Strength Result	122
4.2.4.3	Impact Test Failure Analysis	124
4.3	Water Absorption Test	129
4.3.1	Weight Changes in Specimens	130
4.3.2	Comparison of Weight Changes	142
5.	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	145
5.1	Conclusion	145
5.2	Recommendation	150
	REFERENCES	152
	APPENDICES	
A	Gantt chart of PSM I	160
B	Gantt chart of PSM II	161

LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Classification of composite material	11
2.2	Physical properties and performance characteristics of laminated boards	16
2.3	Some characterizations, limitations and examples of thermoset and thermoplastic	23
2.4	Properties of E and S glass fibers	26
2.5	Typical compositions of glass fibers	26
2.6	Tensile and compressive strength of glass, carbon and aramid fibers	29
2.7	Tensile and flexural properties of coconut spathe and spathe-fibre-reinforced composites	39
3.1	Typical properties of polyester	43
3.2	Design of layers, orientation and arrangement in the composite	50
3.3	ASTM standard method of mechanical testing for composite	56
4.1	Density of each type of samples	65
4.2	Hardness value of samples	68
4.3	Tensile data result of SN 1	73
4.4	Tensile data result of SN 2	75
4.5	Tensile data result of SN 3	77
4.6	Tensile data result of SN 4	79
4.7	Tensile data result of SN 5	81
4.8	Tensile data result of SN 6	83
4.9	Tensile data result of SN 7	85
4.10	Tensile data result of SN 8	87
4.11	Tensile data result of SN 9	89
4.12	Tensile data result of SN 10	91
4.13	Tensile data result of SN 11	93
4.14	Tensile data result of actual product	94
4.15	Young's Modulus for all the samples	96
4.16	Ultimate Tensile Strengths for all the samples	99

4.17	Maximum Forces for all the samples	102
4.18	Extension at peak for all the samples	105
4.19	Flexural data result of SN 9	108
4.20	Data result for flexural test	111
4.21	Energy absorbed of specimens in impact test	119
4.22	Impact Strength of specimens in impact test	122
4.23	Failure modes of the samples in impact test	125
5.1	BOM for SN 1 to SN 11	149

LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	Flowchart of research methodology	6
2.1	Laminate structure	14
2.2	Forms of glass fibers	30
2.3	Hand lay up process	34
2.4	Spray up process	35
2.5	Vacuum infusion process	37
3.1	Flow chart of methodology	41
3.2	Unsaturated polyester resin	43
3.3	Woven roving E glass fiber	44
3.4	Wire mesh orientation	45
3.5	Mild steel wire mesh	46
3.6	Shape of the product	47
3.7	Cross ply laminate composite	48
3.8	Symmetric laminate composite	48
3.9	Process flow chart of hand lay up	53
3.10	Mould for hand lay up	54
3.11	Cold press during polyester curing	55
3.12	ASTM D 3039 tensile test specimen	57
3.13	ASTM D 6110 charpy impact test specimen	58
3.14	Loading in the center of support span	59
3.15	Durometer type D	59
3.16	The schematic of inclined durometer indenter	60
3.17	Distance between each point of hardness test on specimen	61
3.18	Optical microscope	62
3.19	Heavy duty plastic pallet	63
4.1	Graph of density for the 11 samples	66
4.2	Measure hardness with shore Durometer Type D	68
4.3	Graph of hardness for the 11 samples	71
4.4	Universal Test Machine (UTM)	72
4.5	Tensile test result for SN 1	74

4.6	Tensile test result for SN 2	75
4.7	Pull out of fibreglass	76
4.8	Tensile test result for SN 3	78
4.9	Delamination in laminate composite	78
4.10	Tensile test result for SN 4	80
4.11	Tensile test result for SN 5	82
4.12	Tensile test result for SN 6	84
4.13	Tensile test result for SN 7	86
4.14	Tensile test result for SN 8	88
4.15	Tensile test result for SN 9	90
4.16	Tensile test result for SN 10	92
4.17	Tensile test result for SN 11	94
4.18	Tensile test result for actual product	95
4.19	Graph of Young's Modulus for all samples in tensile test	97
4.20	Graph of UTS for all samples in tensile test	100
4.21	Graph of maximum forces for all samples in tensile test	103
4.22	Graph of extension at peak for all samples in tensile test	106
4.23	Instron Universal Test Machine	107
4.24	Flexural test result for SN 9	109
4.25	Failure modes on specimen in flexural test	110
4.26	Graph of maximum force for flexural test	112
4.27	Graph of maximum stress for flexural test	114
4.28	Graph of extension at peak for flexural test	116
4.29	Graph of energy absorbed for impact test	120
4.30	Graph of impact strength for impact test	123
4.31	Failure mode of SN 1	126
4.32	Failure mode of SN 2	126
4.33	Failure mode of SN 3	127
4.34	Failure mode of SN 4	127
4.35	Face indentation, peel off and pull out failure modes	128
4.36	Slip failure mode	128
4.37	Failure mode of actual product	129
4.38	Specimens in water absorption test	130

4.39	Weight change in SN 1	131
4.40	Weight change in SN 2	132
4.41	Weight change in SN 3	133
4.42	Weight change in SN 4	134
4.43	Weight change in SN 5	135
4.44	Weight change in SN 6	136
4.45	Weight change in SN 7	137
4.46	Weight change in SN 8	138
4.47	Weight change in SN 9	139
4.48	Weight change in SN 10	140
4.49	Weight change in SN 11	141
4.50	Weight change in actual product	142
4.51	Weight changes of the samples	143

LIST OF SYMBOLS

%	-	Percent
°	-	Degree
±	-	Plus minus
° C	-	Degree Celcius
A	-	Area
cm	-	Centimeter
E	-	Tensile modulus
F	-	Force
g/mm ²	-	Gram per milimeter square
J	-	Joule
J/m ²	-	Joule per meter square
kN/min	-	Kilo Newton per minute
kg/m ³	-	Kilogram per meter cube
mm	-	Millimeter
mm/min	-	Milimeter per minute
MPa	-	Mega Pascal
N/m ²	-	Newton per meter square
V	-	Volume
ε	-	Tensile strain
σ	-	Tensile strength
F _{ar}	-	Fiber area
l	-	Length
d	-	Diameter
m	-	Meter
s	-	Second
RM	-	Ringgit Malaysia

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP	-	Actual Product
ASTM	-	American Standard Test Method
BOM	-	Bill of Material
C	-	Complete Break
CMC	-	Ceramic Matrix Composite
FRP	-	Fiber Reinforced Plastic
H	-	Hinge Break
HDPE	-	High Density Polyethylene
ISO	-	International Standard Organization
MEKP	-	Methyl Ethyl Ketone Peroxide
MMC	-	Metal Matrix Composite
NB	-	Non Break
P	-	Partial Break
PMC	-	Polymer Matrix Composite
RM	-	Ringgit Malaysia
ROM	-	Rule of Mixture
RTM	-	Resin Transfer Moulding
SME	-	Small Medium Enterprise
SMI	-	Small Medium Industry
SN	-	Serial Number
UTeM	-	Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka
UTM	-	Universal Tensile Machine
UTS	-	Ultimate Tensile Strength
UV	-	Ultra Violet
VIP	-	Vacuum Infusion Process

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Hybrid composites are the composites that are produced by more than two of reinforcements or matrix materials. There are several types of hybrid composites characterized. One of the most common and simplest hybrid composites is interply or laminated, where alternate layers of the two or more materials are stacked in a regular manner.

Plastic laminates composite is normally meant Fiber Reinforced Plastic (FRP) which is the composite materials made of a polymer matrix reinforced with fibers. The most common used fiber is fiberglass, carbon, or aramid, while the matrix material is usually an epoxy, or polyester which is from family of thermosetting plastic. Glass reinforced plastic was the strongest and had the highest resistivity to deforming forces when force was applied on it in parallel. However, it became the weakest when the fibers were perpendicular (Morton, 1974, p. 3). To overcome the limitation of the fiber reinforced composite, the orientation of the glass fiber fabric were oriented in two dimensional weaves and above. When forces were applied perpendicularly to one orientation, another orientation in parallel overcame the forces accordingly by Erhard, (2006, p. 199). Hence, this eliminated the potential for weak spots in the polymer.

The most common used method for reinforced plastics composite products is hand lay-up process. It is due to its low cost and it can consist of any size or configuration. Moreover, the process does not require any special tools. Parts can be easily

fabricated in a short period. Besides that, molds can be easily modified, cut into part for prefabrication and applied to create various surface textures. The rigid properties of the final product require that under cuts and straight wall be eliminated. Any openings must be machined in post molding operations. All corners must have somewhat large radius.

Polyester resin is one of the most common used in hand lay-up method for FRP. It acts as the matrix in the composite. It is popular and widely used, especially in the marine industry to shape and form hulls and outer layers of ships. All polyester resins are pale in colors and thermosetting. Besides, polyester resins are resistant to water and UV rays.

Fiberglass is material made from extremely fine fibers of glass. It is normally used as a reinforcing agent for many polymer products. Glass fibers are popular due to their high ratio of surface area to weight which can produce very light products with high strengths. Besides fiberglass, reinforcing wire mesh can be the reinforcement in the polymer matrix composite. Wire mesh is used due to its unique deformed wire pattern which offers superior bonding, improved stress distribution and crack width control. Weldmesh is a welded steel mesh manufactured from bright drawn wire electrically welded at the intersections. The most common raw material of the steel mesh is stainless steel due to its properties. According to BRC West Indies Limited (2005, p. 2), weldmesh had average shear strength equal to 80 % of the wire strength.

Normally, hardboard was made out of exploded wood fibers that have been highly compressed in order to make it denser and much stronger and harder. Hence, hardboard was sometimes called high density fiberboard, which was stated by Franc (1994, p. 156). According to the Composite Panel Association, other materials could be added during the manufacturing process of hardboard to improve certain properties, such as resistance to abrasion and moisture, and increased strength and durability. Hardboard had a uniform thickness, density and appearance and had no grain. It resisted marring, scuffing and abrasion, as well as changes in temperature and humidity. Hardboard could be cut, routed, shaped and drilled with standard woodworking tools. In addition, hardboard could be securely glued or fastened with

screws, staples or nails. Hardboard panels could be laminated with paper overlays, plastic laminates and veneers.

1.2 Problem Statements

In the past, wood fiber was often used in hardboard application due to its inexpensive and fairly rigid product for its thickness, and yet it was flexible enough to bend where needed. However, it was not consistent in thickness because of the continuous press it was made in as it was opposite to the single opening press the wood fiber was made. Besides that, this type of hardboard could not be used outside because it absorbed water. Due to the limitation of the previous hardboard product, a thermosetting material, polyester which had good resistance in water and more strength and high dimensional stability was selected as replacements to vary the applications of hardboard.

Hardboard sheet was commonly formed in a hot press with the application of heat and pressure. However, the board produced harmful gases and vapors during the heat forming process. Also, this heat method was expensive and results in a long forming cycle time (Cole *et al.*, 1982, p. 2). In order to overcome the problems, hand lay-up method was carried out and the hydraulic cold press was applied to replace hot forming hardboard. Hand lay-up method was the chosen because it was simple, widely used and low cost. Furthermore, small thickness and high strength of hardboard were preferable. The hydraulic press was applied to compress it for improvements of the properties. Modern hydraulic presses were, in some cases, better suited to applications where the mechanical press had been traditionally more popular (Lown, 1999, p. 1). However, hydraulic press might cost less than an equivalent mechanical press depending on the application. Hydraulic cold press was simple process which was done at room temperature to offer good performance and reliability.

The quality of the product was very dependent on thickness and physical properties of the hardboard. Normally, composite was made from one matrix and reinforcement.

For example, polyester was the matrix while fiberglass acted as the reinforcement. However, this combination was not strong enough for some hardboard applications. Stronger and more stable product was always preferred. Thus, wire mesh was added as a support in order to compare the strength and stability. In this composite, polyester was matrix, fiberglass as reinforcement and wire mesh acted as the backbone of the hardboard.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives that were needed to achieve include:

- (a) To produce laminate composite by hand lay-up method via polyester resins in order to compare the tensile, flexural, impact, hardness and water absorption properties.
- (b) To determine the failure modes of different layer and arrangement of reinforcements in a laminate composite.
- (c) To investigate on the most optimum ratio of matrix and reinforcement based on cost and properties in the laminate composite sample.

1.4 Scope of Study

- (a) Study of requirements on hardboard applications.
- (b) Study of fibreglass reinforced polyester laminated hardboard panels.
- (c) Study of properties of polyester resins, fibreglass and reinforcing wire mesh in a hybrid laminate composite.
- (d) Study of elastic constants of unidirectional and multidirectional composite.
- (e) Study of composition between matrix and reinforcements in composites.